Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Vocational Instructor/Administrator of the Year Award
Recipient Biographies

Secondary Instructor of the Year – Melissa Reese, Instructor, Valdez High School

Melissa Reese was nominated by Laurie Prax, Owner/Manager of KVAK Radio in Valdez, AK. Ms. Reese is an instructor at Valdez High School. She is currently the Curriculum Director, Vocational-Technical Education Provides member and CTE Director at Valdez High School, a Tech Prep Consortium board Member for the University of Alaska Anchorage, and an adjunct teacher at Prince William Sound Community College. Valdez High School Principal Geary Cantrell provided the following comment for Ms. Reese's nomination letter: "Melissa is an outstanding teacher who is very committee to her job responsibilities, and is willing to put in the extra time necessary to accomplish performance standards. Melissa is involved with so many things that it is hard to describe them all, but to name a few, she is the BPA Sponsor, VHS vocational Director, business education teacher, language arts instructor, and also serves on many state level boards and committees. Her students are given real life opportunities to learn and succeed".

Post Secondary Administrator of the Year – Tom Minder, Coordinator, Kornfeind Training Center, Fairbanks

Tom Minder was nominated by Steven Boyd, Chapter Manager of NECA. Mr. Minder is the Coordinator of Kornfeind Training Center in Fairbanks. He has been instrumental at the national level as a member of the Inside Wireman Curriculum Review and Development Committee which is responsible for the nationwide curriculum used by all the training centers. He has served the industry well in his pursuit and administration of STEP grants that have provided valuable Commercial Drivers License training which is important to the industry statewide. Tom has also worked with many groups from rural Alaska to encourage and facilitate applicants to the Local 1547 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers training program.